

# Protecting the Outer Banks: Why Coastal Conservation Matters



Outer Banks, North Carolina



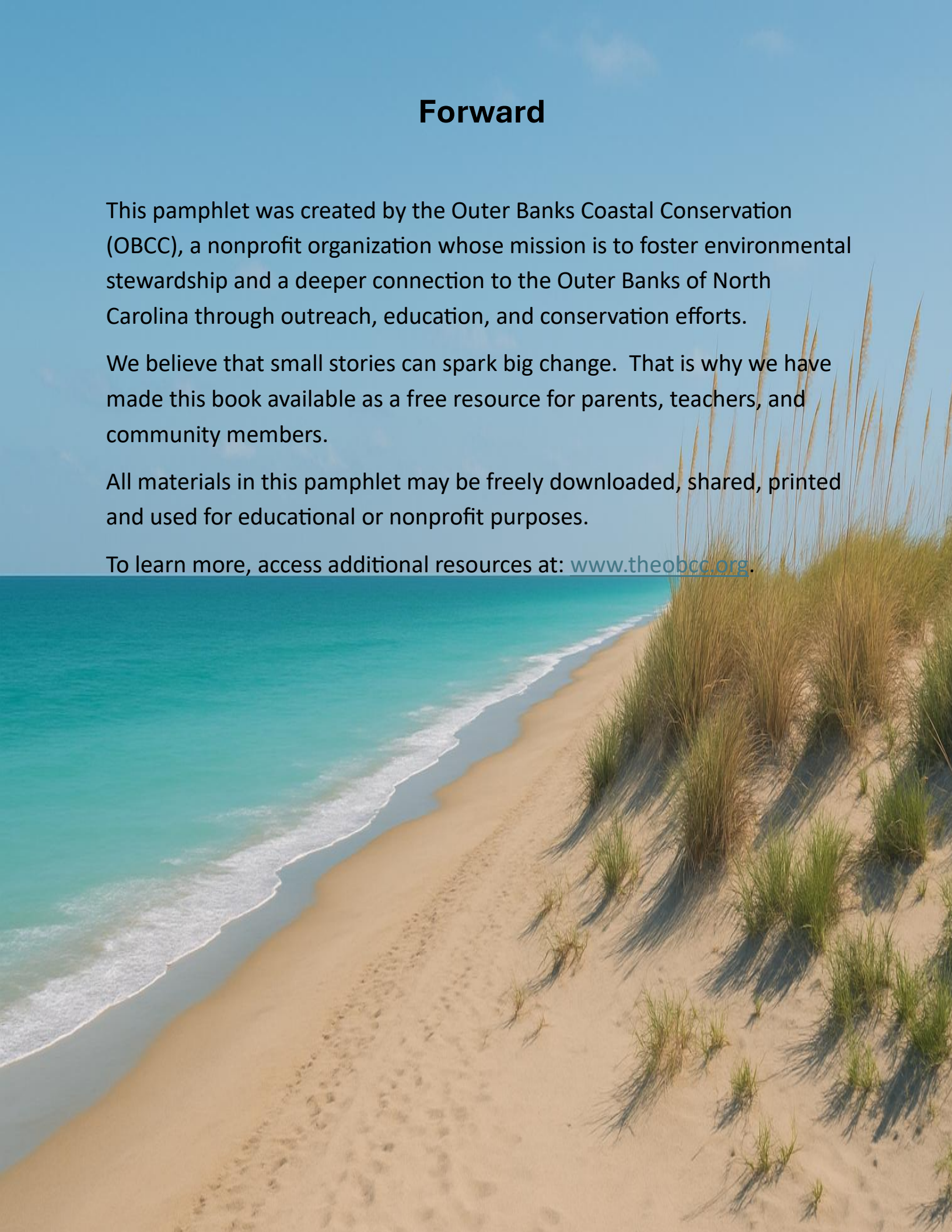
# Forward

This pamphlet was created by the Outer Banks Coastal Conservation (OBCC), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to the Outer Banks of North Carolina through outreach, education, and conservation efforts.

We believe that small stories can spark big change. That is why we have made this book available as a free resource for parents, teachers, and community members.

All materials in this pamphlet may be freely downloaded, shared, printed and used for educational or nonprofit purposes.

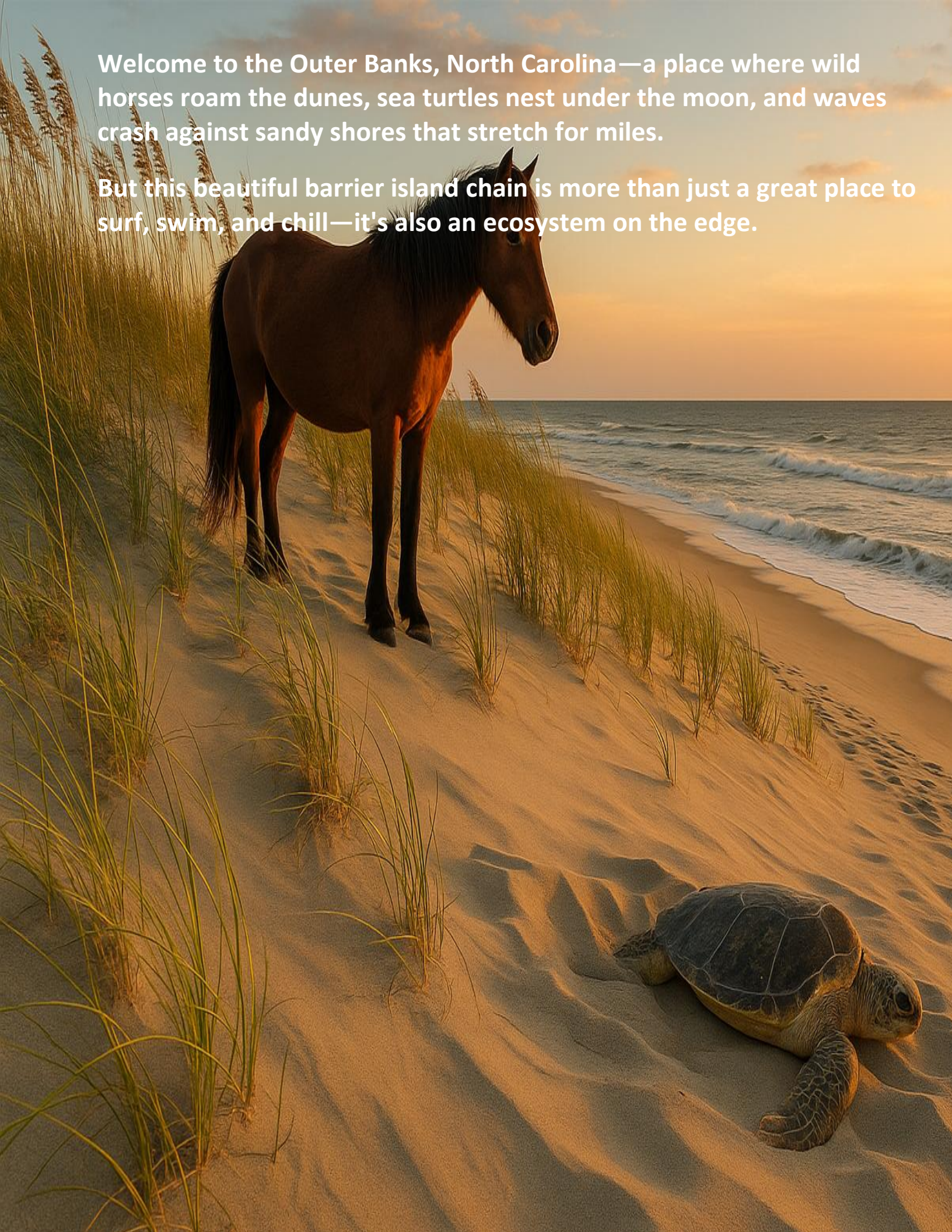
To learn more, access additional resources at: [www.theobcc.org](http://www.theobcc.org).





Welcome to the Outer Banks, North Carolina—a place where wild horses roam the dunes, sea turtles nest under the moon, and waves crash against sandy shores that stretch for miles.

But this beautiful barrier island chain is more than just a great place to surf, swim, and chill—it's also an ecosystem on the edge.





# What Makes the Outer Banks So Special?

The Outer Banks is a unique coastal region made up of narrow barrier islands. These natural sandbars shift and reshape over time, helping protect the mainland from storms and hurricanes. But that's not all—they're also home to:

- Endangered sea turtles that return each summer to lay their eggs
- The legendary Corolla wild horses that have roamed for centuries
- Migrating birds that use the islands as a resting spot on long journeys
- Fragile dune ecosystems that support crabs, grasses, and rare plants





# The Problem: Human Impact

As the Outer Banks becomes more popular, it's also more vulnerable. Here's how people sometimes hurt these delicate environments—often without meaning to:

- Walking on sand dunes crushes vegetation and ruins habitats
- Leaving trash on the beach leads to marine debris that injures or kills wildlife
- Digging deep holes can trap baby turtles or injure beachgoers
- Feeding or approaching wild animals like horses or birds can cause stress and harm

Even small actions can have big consequences—especially on narrow barrier islands where space and resources are limited.



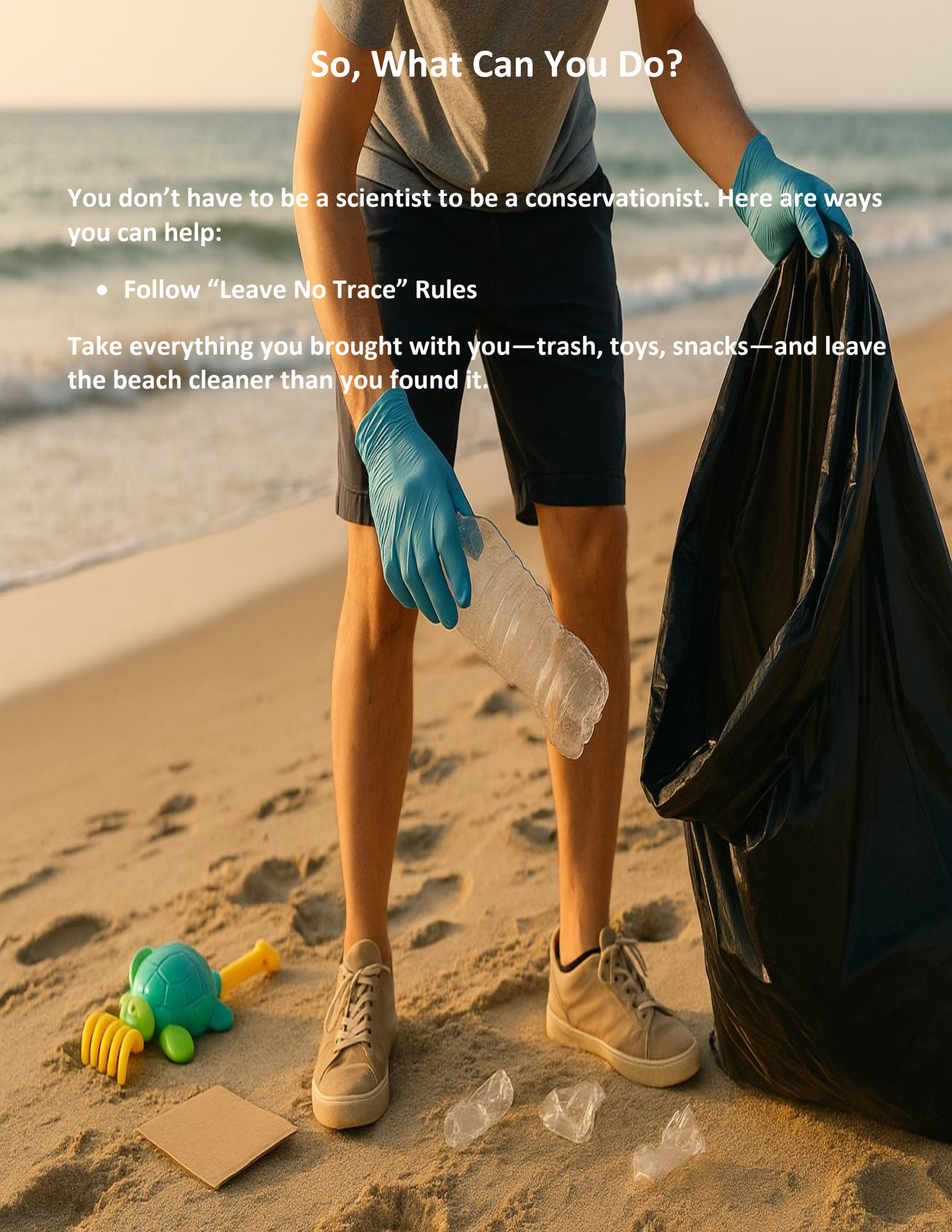


# So, What Can You Do?

You don't have to be a scientist to be a conservationist. Here are ways you can help:

- Follow “Leave No Trace” Rules

Take everything you brought with you—trash, toys, snacks—and leave the beach cleaner than you found it.





- **Respect the Dunes**

**Stay on marked paths and boardwalks. The dunes help prevent flooding and provide homes for animals like ghost crabs and nesting birds.**



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- **Keep Your Distance**

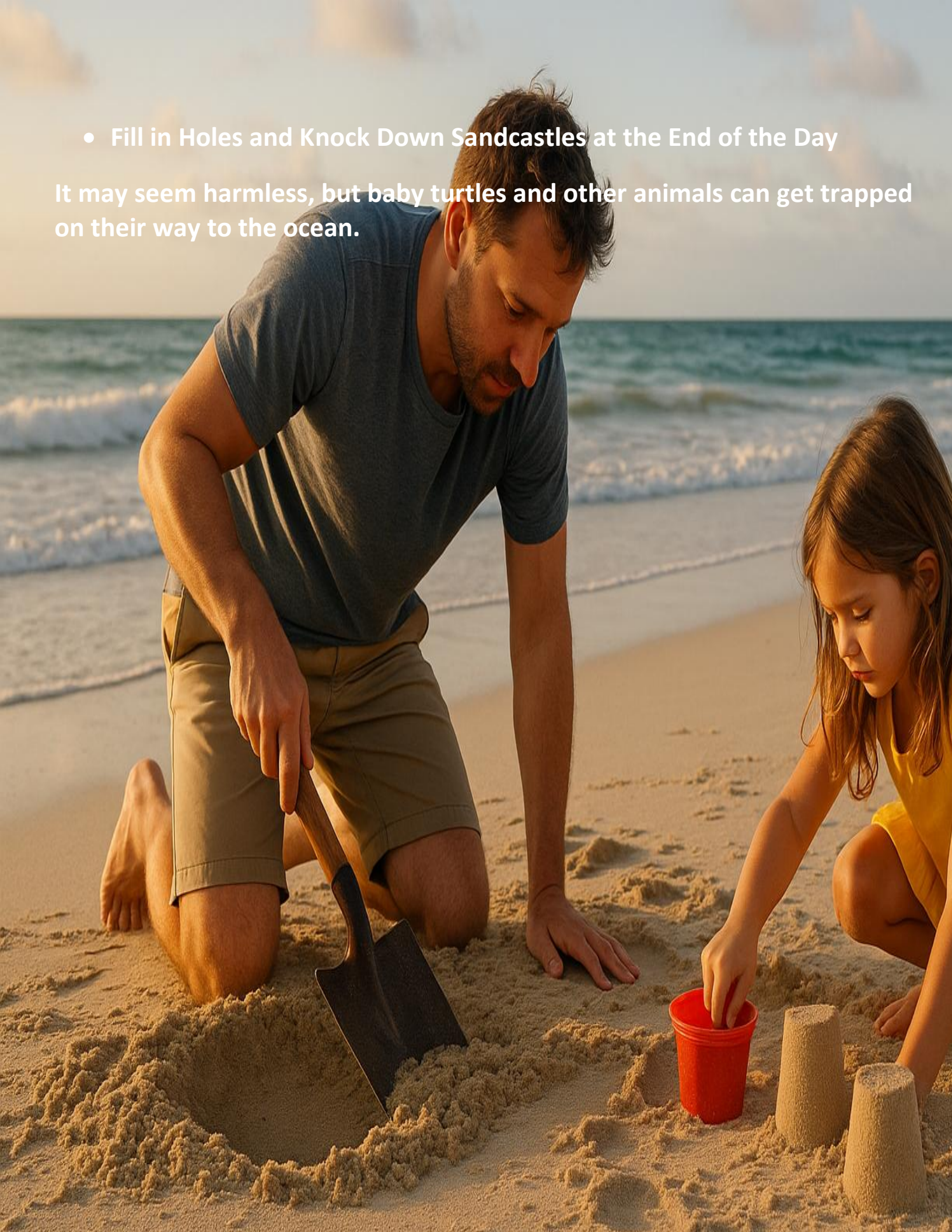
**Admire wild horses, sea turtles, and birds from afar.**





- **Fill in Holes and Knock Down Sandcastles at the End of the Day**

**It may seem harmless, but baby turtles and other animals can get trapped on their way to the ocean.**





- **Speak Up and Volunteer**

Join a beach cleanup, volunteer with a wildlife group, or educate younger kids about conservation. You can make a real difference.

